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ILLINOIS FURBEARER TRAPPING SURVEY, 1997-98

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FEDERAL AID IN WILDLIFE RESTORATION ACT
PROJECT NUMBER: W-112-R-7

JOB COMPLETION REPORT
ILLINOIS FURBEARER TRAPPING SURVEY, 1997-98
STUDY 101
JOB NUMBER 101:2

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JOB COMPLETION REPORT

WILDLIFE HARVEST AND HUNTER OPINION SURVEYS

STATE OF ILLINOIS

PROJECT No. W-112-R-7

STUDY No. 101: Surveys of Hunters/Trappers Via Mail-Letter Questionnaire

JOB NO. 101:2: llinois Furbearer Trapping Survey, 1997-98

ABSTRACT: A systematic sample of 902 persons who purchased a 1997 Illinois resident trapping license was surveyed after the furbearer trapping season. The licensees were contacted by bulk rate postage (Address Service Requested) in three mailings. Questionnaires were delivered to 864 (95.8%) of the recipients, from which 689 useable replies were received (79.7% response). Of these, 601 (87.2%) were active trappers--i.e., set ≥1 traps during the season. Only 11 (1.8%) of the active trappers were ineffective--i.e., caught nothing. One-fourth (23.7%) of the licensed trappers (active and inactive) were members of a trapping club or organization.

The 1997-98 survey covered 11 furbearer species. The badger was added to the list of legal game for trapping beginning with the 1996-97 season. Findings are presented: (1) on a statewide basis, (2) for each of the 10 wildlife management units in the state, and (3) for the two furbearer management zones currently in use. Data include estimated number and density of effective trappers, estimated number and density of trapper harvest, and average season catch. Statewide estimates for the number of effective trappers (and their catch) were: muskrat (Ondatra zibethicus) 2,512 (89,781), mink (Mustela vison) 1,481 (5,615), raccoon (Procyon lotor) 3,551 (127,737), opossum (Didelphis virginiana) 2,359 (32,418), red fox (Vulpes vulpes) 615 (1,391), gray fox (Urocyon cinereoargenteus) 103 (122), beaver (Castor canadensis) 1,679 (16,177), striped skunk (Mephitis mephitis) 711 (2,878), weasel (Mustela frenata and M. nivalis) 58 (71), coyote (Canis latrans) 724 (3,250), badger (Taxidea taxus) 58 (71), and all species combined 3,782 (279,511). There were an estimated 3,852 active trappers in 1997-98.

Active trappers had traps set for an average of 33.7 days (or nights) during the 1997-98 season. Almost two-thirds (61.2%) of the effective muskrat trappers caught ≤20 muskrats. An estimated 43.7% of the effective raccoon trappers caught 1-15 raccoons and 57.0% caught ≤25. Furbearers, primarily raccoons, were hunted by 31.1% of the licensed trappers. The harvest of furbearers by hunting trappers was equivalent to 13.3% of the trapped catch. The trappers who hunted took almost all of their raccoon harvest with the aid of hounds/dogs (49.8%) or hand-held lights while on foot (47.6%). Ninety trappers reported seeing river otter (Lutra canadensis) or otter sign in 47 counties, and 67 trappers reported seeing bobcat (Felis rufus) or bobcat sign in 44 counties, during the past 3 years. A plurality (34.0%) of the active trappers thought the muskrat population had decreased from 1996-97 to 1997-98, whereas 45.0% believed the raccoon population was unchanged.

JOB COMPLETION REPORT

SURVEYS AND INVESTIGATIONS PROGRAM

STATE OF ILLINOIS

PROJECT NO. W-112-R-7

STUDY 101: Wildlife Harvest and Hunter Opinion Surveys

JOB NO. 101.2: Illinois Furbearer Trapping Survey, 1997-98

OBJECTIVE: To survey furbearer (11 species of mammals) trappers to determine their activities, harvests, characteristics, attitudes, and opinions in Illinois.

PROCEDURES: A stratified random sample of individuals who purchased 1997 trapping licenses was surveyed via mail-questionnaire. Name/address cards of license purchasers were filled out by vendors for the first license sold in each book of 5 resident trapping licenses in the 1997 series (total sales estimated at 4,416 - 1 November 1998) (Fig. 1). At the same time, the person purchasing the license was provided with an information card which requested him/her to keep a record of his/her trapping activities (Fig. 2). The name/address cards were returned to the Division of Wildlife Resources via business reply mail and were filed according to the licensee's county of residence. The sample was drawn from these cards. For some strata, it was necessary to supplement the mailing list with names/addresses from the stubs of trapping licenses sold during the current year.

The stratified random sample was based on the distribution of the 1986-1990 trapping license sales. The size of the sample was set at approximately 900 because this quantity would result in 600 to 700 useable replies (about 15% of all licensed trappers) and insure statistically reliable results at the statewide level.

The questionnaire (Fig. 3), a letter of explanation (Fig. 4), and a return envelope (pre-addressed and postage-paid, first class) were mailed to the individuals on the mailing list. Non-respondents were sent 2nd and 3rd copies of the questionnaire, and accompanying letters (Figs. 5 and 6) at approximately monthly intervals. Bulk rate postage (Address Service Requested) was used for sending out all 3 mailings.

Data from returned questionnaires were transferred to a computer file (Ashton-Tate dBASE IV) and analyzed using a computer program designed for the survey. Respondents were placed into 1 of 2 categories: inactive - those who did not set any traps for furbearers, or active - those who did set $\geq$1 traps for furbearers. Active trappers were further classified as: effective - those who caught $\geq$1 furbearers of the species in question, or ineffective - those who did not catch any furbearers.

Data for each species surveyed were compiled for the 10 wildlife management units in Illinois (Fig. 7). In addition, confidence limits at the 95% level were calculated by species for the number of effective trappers, average season catch, and total trapper harvest on a statewide basis. The formulas used were described by Cochran (1953) and Snedecor and Cochran (1967). These are as follows:

a. Number of effective trappers for species:

$$\pm 2N\sqrt{\frac{pq}{n}}$$

where N = total license sales

n = number of licensees in sample

p = portion of licensees in sample who effectively trapped species in question

q = $1-p$

b. Average season catch per effective trapper for species in question:

$$\pm\ 1.96\ \frac{s}{\sqrt{n_1}}$$

where s = standard deviation of average catch per effective trapper

n_1 = number of licensees in sample who effectively trapped species in question

c. Total trapper harvest:

$$\pm 2N\ x\ \frac{s}{\sqrt{n}}$$

All calculations assumed there were no differences between the activities of the licensees who returned the questionnaire and those who did not.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS:

1997-98 Trapping Seasons

The 1997-98 fur-bearing mammal trapping seasons varied from 67 to 147 days in length (Table 1). The seasons for all species except beaver lasted 67 days in both the northern and southern management zones (Fig. 7). In the northern zone, opening dates were 5 November for muskrat, mink, raccoon, opossum, beaver, striped skunk, and weasel, and 10 November for red fox, gray fox, coyote, and badger. In the southern zone, opening dates were 10 November for all 11 species. The beaver trapping season was 147 days in length in northern zone and 142 days in the southern zone. Special regulations reduced the length of the beaver season to 67 days along the Mississippi River from Interstate 80 north to the JoDaviess County line as a protective measure for river otter. Except for badger, no bag limits were in effect for any furbearer. Badgers were reinstated as legal game for trapping in Illinois beginning with the 1996-97 season; the limit was 2 per season in the northern zone and 1 in the south zone.

1997-98 Trapper Mail Survey

The initial mailing of 902 questionnaires was made on 18 March 1998. The two follow-up mailings to non-respondents were made on 17 April and 20 May, respectively, and the mailings were closed out on 4 August 1998.

A total of 864 (95.79%) licensees in the 1997-98 survey sample was reached by the Postal Service. The 38 remaining questionnaires were returned as undeliverable. There were 689 useable replies received from the licensees contacted, representing a 79.74% response for the number delivered. Of these respondents, 601 (87.23%) reported that they set $\geq$1 traps for furbearers during the season and were classified as active. A total of 590 (98.17%) active trappers were effective--i.e. caught $\geq$1 furbearers, and the remaining 11 (1.83%) were ineffective--i.e. caught nothing. Based on these data, there were an estimated 3,852 active trappers and 3,782 effective trappers in Illinois in 1997-98.

A total of 163 (23.7%) of the respondents indicated they were members of a trapping club or organization like Fur-taker's, N.T.A., or the Illinois Trapper's Association.

A. Number of Days of Trapping

Active trappers had traps set for an average of 33.7 days (or nights) during the 1997-98 season (Fig. 8). The maximum number of days a trapper could have legally trapped was 147. However, only 23.7% of the respondents stated they had traps set for >45 days, and 37.7% trapped >30 days. The vast majority of trapping activity is concentrated during the initial 15 to 30 days of the muskrat, mink, and raccoon seasons. In comparison, Illinois trappers had traps set for an average of 23.0 days in 1985-86 (108-day season), 20.9 days in 1990-91 (139-day season), 30.4 days in 1993-94 (147 days), 28.4 days (147-day season) in 1994-95, 30.7 days in 1995-96, and 32.3 days in 1997-98 (Hubert 1986; Anderson and Campbell 1992 and 1998; Anderson et al. 1995, 1996, and 1997).

B. Fur Harvest Summary

A statewide summary for the 11 species of furbearers surveyed in 1997-98 is presented in Table 2. The data for each species include the estimated number of effective trappers and their representation (percentage) among all licensed trappers, average season catch per effective trapper, and estimated total trapper harvest. Similar information for each of the 11 species, plus estimated density of effective trappers and furbearer harvest in each of the 10 wildlife management units, is provided in Tables 3 through 13. The original sample sizes from which these data were derived are presented in Table 14, which also provides the percent of effective trappers for each species.

The 95% confidence intervals for number of effective trappers, average season catch per effective trapper, and total harvest for each furbearer statewide are given in Table 15. In most instances, those species with the greater number of effective trappers in the sample have smaller limits of variability which result in greater confidence in the projections. For example, effective raccoon trappers were the most numerous in 1997-98 and their projected number varied by only $\pm$3.77%. The 95% confidence interval projections for less numerous gray fox trappers varied by $\pm$49.51% and for uncommon weasel trappers by $\pm$65.52%.

C. Distribution of Harvest Among Effective Trappers

The muskrat and raccoon were the 2 most important furbearers trapped during the 1997-98 season in terms of average season catch, total harvest, and number of effective trappers (Table 2). The reported number of muskrats harvested by 392 effective muskrat trappers ranged from 1 to 700 and averaged 35.73 (Fig. 9). During the season, 61.2% of these trappers harvested $\leq$20 muskrats and 94.1% caught $\leq$100. The average number of muskrats

taken by effective trappers was 21.5% greater in 1997-98 than in 1996-97 (Anderson and Campbell 1998). Of the effective trappers who responded, 48 (12.2%) stated that their catch averaged ≥1 muskrats per day for the entire season.

The distribution of harvest among effective raccoon trappers was similar to that for muskrat. The number of raccoons caught by the 554 effective raccoon trappers for whom data were available averaged 35.97 and ranged from 1 to 434 (Fig. 10). Less than the average season catch was taken by 69.9% of these trappers. For the entire season, 43.7% of the trappers harvested ≤15 raccoons and 57.0% trapped ≤25. Only 84 (15.2%) of the effective raccoon trappers reported making an average daily catch of ≥1 raccoons throughout the season.

The harvest of the other 9 open-season furbearers was distributed among effective trappers much like the muskrat and raccoon harvests (Table 16). For 4 of these species (red fox, gray fox, weasel, and badger), ≤15% of the effective trappers made season catches of >5 pelts. For the other species, the following percentages of effective trappers took >5 pelts: mink 19.4%, opossum 56.7%, beaver 48.9%, striped skunk 19.9%, and coyote 23.1%.

The above data emphasize the inapplicability of bag limits (both daily and seasonal) to furbearer trapping in Illinois. Few trappers are successful in making large seasonal catches. The ones who do are active throughout the season over extensive areas. Reductions in season length offer the most potential for reducing the furbearer harvest by highly successful trappers. Bag limits could potentially increase harvest because of their goal-setting implications.

D. Management Zone Data Summary

Management zone and statewide data summaries for each of the 11 species of furbearers surveyed in 1997-98 are presented in Tables 17 through 27. The data for each species include estimated number and density of effective trappers, average season catch, estimated total trapper harvest, and trapper harvest per unit area. The northern and southern zones listed for 1997-98 are nearly identical to the zones employed for regulatory management in previous years (1979-80 through 1996-97) (Fig. 7).

E. Pelts Sold

Trappers sold an estimated 93.28% of their catch during the 1997-98 season. The proportion of each species sold ranged from a low of 34.52% for skunk to a high of 97.47% for muskrat (Table 2). The fraction of pelts sold in Illinois and out-of-state also

varies among species (Table 28). Overall, 80.07% of the marketed portion of the trapped catch was sold in Illinois and 19.93% out-of-state. In comparison, 95.33% of the 1983-84 catch was sold (93.86% in Illinois and 6.14% out-of-state) (Hubert 1984). More recently, 90.67% of the 1994-95 catch was sold (82.25% in Illinois and 17.75% out-of-state) (Anderson et al. 1996).

F. Fur Hunting by Trappers

A total of 214 trappers (31.06% of licensees sampled) reported hunting furbearers with gun and/or dogs in 1997-98 (Table 29). This equates to a statewide total of 1,372 hunting trappers, and their total harvest was estimated to be 37,232 pelts or an average of 27.14 per hunter. The hunting harvest equals 13.32% of the total trapped catch estimated by this survey. The raccoon was hunted by more trappers than any other species. Next in popularity was the coyote. From 1986-87 through 1990-91, 25.91% to 29.47% of the trappers in Illinois also hunted furbearers (Hubert 1987, 1988, 1989; Anderson et al. 1990 and 1991). In 1993-94, 28.30% of Illinois' trappers also hunted furbearers (Anderson et al. 1995); 27.56% hunted in 1994-95, 28.82% hunted in 1995-96 (Anderson et al. 1996 and 1997), and 30.35% hunted in 1996-97 (Anderson and Campbell 1998). Sampson (1973) reported that 33.6% of the trappers in Missouri were fur hunters. Obviously, there is much overlap between the user groups designated as fur trappers and fur hunters.

The trappers who hunted took one-half (49.8%) of their raccoon harvest with the aid of hounds or dogs (Table 30). Interestingly, almost as many (47.6%) raccoons were taken by using a hand-held light while on foot. Relatively few (2.6%) of the raccoons harvested by hunters were taken with the use of predator calls.

G. Observations of River Otters and Bobcats

Participating trappers were asked whether they saw river otter or otter sign, and/or bobcat or bobcat sign, during the past 3 years. Ninety trappers claimed they saw river otter or otter sign. These trappers provided 86 reports of otter in 47 counties (Fig. 11). Although the reports came from counties throughout the state, they tended to be associated with riverine habitat.

Sixty-seven trappers said they saw bobcat or bobcat sign. These trappers provided 65 reports of bobcat in 44 counties (Fig. 12). With the exception of northeast and east-central Illinois, the counties were located throughout the state.

H. Changes in Furbearer Populations

When asked to express their opinions of changes in furbearer populations from 1996-97 to 1997-98, a plurality (45.0%) of the active trappers thought that raccoon numbers were unchanged (Table 31). However, a plurality (34.0%) of the trappers thought that muskrat numbers were down. For the other 3 species, pluralities of the trappers who expressed opinions felt that beaver and coyote numbers were up, and that red fox numbers were down.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The present Illinois Furbearer Trapping Survey probably realizes its best use and reliability for furbearer management as an indicator of trends in trapping pressure, success, harvest, and recreation. Until 1990, this survey (formerly called "Trapper Harvest Survey") provided the only regional harvest data available for the trapped portion of the annual furbearer catch. Beginning with the 1990-91 season, another survey, entitled "Illinois Fur Hunter/Trapper Survey", was created. Because the mailing list for this survey was derived from purchasers of the Illinois Furbearer Stamp, it provided data for both fur hunter and fur trapper activities.

Both the Fur Hunter/Trapper Survey and the Furbearer Trapping Survey were conducted during the 1990-91 season in order to have a year of overlap in the 2 data sets for trapping activities. Because there was a high level of agreement between the 2 surveys (Anderson and Campbell 1992), the Furbearer Trapping Survey was discontinued. The Fur Hunter/Trapper Survey was continued through the 1991-92 and 1992-93 seasons.

The creation of the Illinois Habitat Stamp in 1993 was accompanied by a legislative mandate to discontinue the Illinois Furbearer Stamp after the 1992 season. The Habitat Stamp is required for most people who take or attempt to take any game species in Illinois except waterfowl. Because of these changes, the Fur Hunter/Trapper Survey was replaced with two separate surveys: (1) the present Furbearer Trapping survey, which will be conducted annually and will sample purchasers of the resident trapping license, and (2) a Furbearer Hunter Survey, which will be conducted periodically and will sample purchasers of the Habitat Stamp who indicate on the stamp stub that they hunted furbearers during the previous year.

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DATA AND REPORTS:

Original data and reports in this investigation are on file in the Investigations and Surveys Program offices, Natural Resources Studies Annex, Champaign, Illinois 61820.

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DATE: 1 April 1999

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Table 1. Furbearer trapping seasons in Illinois, 1997-98.

Species	Trapping Seasons	
	Northern Zone	Southern Zone
Muskrat, mink, raccoon, opossum, striped skunk, weasel	5 Nov - 10 Jan (67)[a]	10 Nov - 15 Jan (67)
Beaver	5 Nov - 31 Mar (147)[b]	10 Nov - 31 Mar (142)
Red fox, gray fox, coyote, badger	10 Nov - 15 Jan (67)	10 Nov - 15 Jan (67)

[a]Numbers in parentheses are season lengths in days.

[b]Those portions of Carroll, Whiteside, and Rock Island counties lying west of Illinois Rt. 84 from Interstate 80 north to the JoDaviess county line were open to beaver trapping 5 Nov. 1997 - 10 Jan. 1998 only.

Table 2. Summary of statewide data from post-season mail survey of resident trappers in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=689).

Species	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers	Percent of Licensed Trappers	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Percent Sold	Estimated Total Sold
Muskrat	2512	56.89	35.73	89781	97.47	87512
Mink	1481	33.53	3.79	5615	94.41	5300
Raccoon	3551	80.41	35.97	127737	96.90	123776
Opossum	2359	53.41	13.74	32418	74.71	24221
Red fox	615	13.93	2.26	1391	90.78	1263
Gray fox	103	2.32	1.19	122	73.68	90
Beaver	1679	38.03	9.63	16177	92.43	14953
Skunk	711	16.11	4.05	2878	34.52	993
Weasel	58	1.31	1.22	71	45.45	32
Coyote	724	16.40	4.49	3250	78.50	2551
Badger	58	1.31	1.22	71	63.64	45

Table 3. Summary of muskrat trapper and harvest data by wildlife management units in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=392).

Wildlife Management Unit	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
Northwest Hills	320 (12.8)	3.41	78.56	25176	3.41
Northeast Moraine	135 (5.4)	1.63	26.19	3525	1.63
Mississippi Border-North	192 (7.7)	2.45	17.77	3416	2.45
Mississippi Border-South	269 (10.7)	1.97	40.98	11030	1.97
Western Prairie/Forest	288 (11.5)	2.00	22.64	6531	2.00
Central Sand Prairie	45 (1.8)	1.08	78.14	3506	1.08
Grand Prairie	635 (25.3)	1.21	30.52	19362	1.21
Southern Plain	474 (18.9)	2.00	31.41	14895	2.00
Wabash Border	115 (4.6)	1.71	17.56	2025	1.71
Shawnee Hills	38 (1.5)	0.74	8.17	314	0.74
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	0.00	0	..
Statewide	2512 (100.0)	1.72	35.73	89781	61.46

Table 4. Summary of mink trapper and harvest data by wildlife management units in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=231).

Wildlife Management Unit	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
Northwest Hills	186 (12.6)	1.98	4.83	897	1.98
Northeast Moraine	83 (5.6)	1.01	4.62	385	1.01
Mississippi Border-North	96 (6.5)	1.23	4.00	385	1.23
Mississippi Border-South	122 (8.2)	0.89	2.89	353	0.89
Western Prairie/Forest	173 (11.7)	1.20	2.70	468	1.20
Central Sand Prairie	19 (1.3)	0.46	2.00	38	0.46
Grand Prairie	436 (29.4)	0.83	3.85	1679	0.83
Southern Plain	308 (20.8)	1.30	3.69	1134	1.30
Wabash Border	32 (2.2)	0.48	4.20	135	0.48
Shawnee Hills	26 (1.7)	0.49	5.50	141	0.49
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	0.00	0	..
Statewide	1481 (100.0)	1.01	3.79	5615	3.84

Table 5. Summary of raccoon trapper and harvest data by wildlife management units in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=554).

Wildlife Management Unit	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
Northwest Hills	449 (12.6)	4.77	43.56	19542	4.77
Northeast Moraine	173 (4.9)	2.09	46.30	8012	2.09
Mississippi Border-North	295 (8.3)	3.76	49.76	14671	3.76
Mississippi Border-South	353 (9.9)	2.58	29.15	10274	2.58
Western Prairie/Forest	436 (12.3)	3.02	33.19	14466	3.02
Central Sand Prairie	96 (2.7)	2.32	36.87	3544	2.32
Grand Prairie	1025 (28.9)	1.95	32.20	33021	1.95
Southern Plain	538 (15.2)	2.27	33.83	18215	2.27
Wabash Border	122 (3.4)	1.81	31.84	3878	1.81
Shawnee Hills	64 (1.8)	1.23	33.00	2115	1.23
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	0.00	0	..
Statewide	3551 (100.0)	2.43	35.97	127737	87.45

Table 6. Summary of opossum trapper and harvest data by wildlife management units in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=368).

Wildlife Management Unit	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
Northwest Hills	346 (14.7)	3.68	13.39	4634	3.68
Northeast Moraine	103 (4.3)	1.24	16.75	1718	1.24
Mississippi Border-North	192 (8.2)	2.45	23.00	4422	2.45
Mississippi Border-South	288 (12.2)	2.11	13.33	3846	2.11
Western Prairie/Forest	282 (12.0)	1.96	14.30	4031	1.96
Central Sand Prairie	58 (2.4)	1.39	10.44	602	1.39
Grand Prairie	673 (28.5)	1.28	9.81	6602	1.28
Southern Plain	340 (14.4)	1.43	15.58	5294	1.43
Wabash Border	51 (2.2)	0.76	15.25	782	0.76
Shawnee Hills	26 (1.1)	0.49	19.00	487	0.49
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	0.00	0	..
Statewide	2359 (100.0)	1.61	13.74	32418	22.19

Table 7. Summary of red fox trapper and harvest data by wildlife management units in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=96).

Wildlife Management Unit	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
Northwest Hills	115 (18.8)	1.23	2.89	333	1.23
Northeast Moraine	32 (5.2)	0.39	2.00	64	0.39
Mississippi Border-North	45 (7.3)	0.57	2.86	128	0.57
Mississippi Border-South	45 (7.3)	0.33	2.43	109	0.33
Western Prairie/Forest	71 (11.5)	0.49	1.09	77	0.49
Central Sand Prairie	6 (1.0)	0.15	1.00	6	0.15
Grand Prairie	186 (30.2)	0.35	2.31	429	0.35
Southern Plain	83 (13.5)	0.35	2.46	205	0.35
Wabash Border	13 (2.1)	0.19	1.50	19	0.19
Shawnee Hills	19 (3.1)	0.37	1.00	19	0.37
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	0.00	0	..
Statewide	615 (100.0)	0.42	2.26	1391	0.95

Table 8. Summary of gray fox trapper and harvest data by wildlife management units in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=16).

Wildlife Management Unit	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
Northwest Hills	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Northeast Moraine	13 (12.5)	0.15	1.00	13	0.15
Mississippi Border-North	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Mississippi Border-South	13 (12.5)	0.09	2.50	32	0.09
Western Prairie/Forest	6 (6.3)	0.04	1.00	6	0.04
Central Sand Prairie	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Grand Prairie	19 (18.8)	0.04	1.00	19	0.04
Southern Plain	32 (31.3)	0.14	1.00	32	0.14
Wabash Border	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Shawnee Hills	19 (18.8)	0.37	1.00	19	0.37
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	0.00	0	..
Statewide	103 (100.0)	0.07	1.19	122	0.08

Table 9. Summary of beaver trapper and harvest data by wildlife management units in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=262).

Wildlife Management Unit	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
Northwest Hills	199 (11.8)	2.11	9.03	1795	2.11
Northeast Moraine	77 (4.6)	0.93	12.67	974	0.93
Mississippi Border-North	122 (7.3)	1.55	8.68	1058	1.55
Mississippi Border-South	147 (8.8)	1.08	10.30	1519	1.08
Western Prairie/Forest	167 (9.9)	1.16	4.96	827	1.16
Central Sand Prairie	58 (3.4)	1.39	15.56	897	1.39
Grand Prairie	513 (30.5)	0.97	8.70	4461	0.97
Southern Plain	288 (17.2)	1.22	9.42	2718	1.22
Wabash Border	71 (4.2)	1.05	15.64	1102	1.05
Shawnee Hills	38 (2.3)	0.74	21.50	827	0.74
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	0.00	0	..
Statewide	1679 (100.0)	1.15	9.63	16177	11.07

Table 10. Summary of skunk trapper and harvest data by wildlife management units in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=111).

Wildlife Management Unit	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
Northwest Hills	128 (18.0)	1.36	4.90	628	1.36
Northeast Moraine	38 (5.4)	0.46	8.50	327	0.46
Mississippi Border-North	64 (9.0)	0.82	5.90	378	0.82
Mississippi Border-South	26 (3.6)	0.19	1.00	26	0.19
Western Prairie/Forest	64 (9.0)	0.44	2.20	141	0.44
Central Sand Prairie	26 (3.6)	0.62	2.75	71	0.62
Grand Prairie	256 (36.0)	0.49	3.60	923	0.49
Southern Plain	77 (10.8)	0.32	3.50	269	0.32
Wabash Border	13 (1.8)	0.19	2.00	26	0.19
Shawnee Hills	19 (2.7)	0.37	4.67	90	0.37
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	0.00	0	..
Statewide	711 (100.0)	0.49	4.05	2878	1.97

Table 11. Summary of weasel trapper and harvest data by wildlife management units in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=9).

Wildlife Management Unit	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
Northwest Hills	13 (22.2)	0.14	1.00	13	0.14
Northeast Moraine	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Mississippi Border-North	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Mississippi Border-South	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Western Prairie/Forest	6 (11.1)	0.04	1.00	6	0.04
Central Sand Prairie	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Grand Prairie	26 (44.4)	0.05	1.50	38	0.05
Southern Plain	13 (22.2)	0.05	1.00	13	0.05
Wabash Border	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Shawnee Hills	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	0.00	0	..
Statewide	58 (100.0)	0.04	1.22	71	0.05

Table 12. Summary of coyote trapper and harvest data by wildlife management units in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=113).

Wildlife Management Unit	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
Northwest Hills	90 (12.4)	0.95	6.29	564	0.95
Northeast Moraine	45 (6.2)	0.54	2.71	122	0.54
Mississippi Border-North	58 (8.0)	0.74	4.67	269	0.74
Mississippi Border-South	83 (11.5)	0.61	4.31	359	0.61
Western Prairie/Forest	64 (8.8)	0.44	3.80	244	0.44
Central Sand Prairie	6 (0.9)	0.15	1.00	6	0.15
Grand Prairie	218 (30.1)	0.41	4.53	987	0.41
Southern Plain	122 (16.8)	0.51	4.42	538	0.51
Wabash Border	32 (4.4)	0.48	4.80	154	0.48
Shawnee Hills	6 (0.9)	0.12	1.00	6	0.12
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	0.00	0	..
Statewide	724 (100.0)	0.50	4.49	3250	2.22

Table 13. Summary of badger trapper and harvest data by wildlife management units in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=9).

Wildlife Management Unit	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
Northwest Hills	13 (22.2)	0.14	1.50	19	0.14
Northeast Moraine	6 (11.1)	0.08	2.00	13	0.08
Mississippi Border-North	6 (11.1)	0.08	1.00	6	0.08
Mississippi Border-South	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Western Prairie/Forest	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Central Sand Prairie	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Grand Prairie	26 (44.4)	0.05	1.00	26	0.05
Southern Plain	6 (11.1)	0.03	1.00	6	0.03
Wabash Border	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Shawnee Hills	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	0.00	0	..
Statewide	58 (100.0)	0.04	1.22	71	0.05

Table 14. Statewide sample sizes for post-season mail survey of resident fur trappers in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=689).

Species	Number of Effective Trappers In Sample	Percent Effective Trappers	Season Harvest by Effective Trappers in Sample
Muskrat	392	56.89	14008
Mink	231	33.53	876
Raccoon	554	80.41	19930
Opossum	368	53.41	5058
Red fox	96	13.93	217
Gray fox	16	2.32	19
Beaver	262	38.03	2524
Skunk	111	16.11	449
Weasel	9	1.31	11
Coyote	113	16.40	507
Badger	9	1.31	11

Table 15. Confidence intervals (95%) for estimated number of effective trappers, average season harvest, and total trapper harvest by species in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=689).

Species	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers	Estimated Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Harvest
Muskrat	2512 ± 167	35.73 ± 6.68	89781 ± 18010
Mink	1481 ± 159	3.79 ± 0.63	5615 ± 1207
Raccoon	3551 ± 134	35.97 ± 3.94	127737 ± 14666
Opossum	2359 ± 168	13.74 ± 2.20	32418 ± 5766
Red fox	615 ± 117	2.26 ± 0.45	1391 ± 471
Gray fox	103 ± 51	1.19 ± 0.27	122 ± 114
Beaver	1679 ± 163	9.63 ± 1.46	16177 ± 3001
Skunk	711 ± 124	4.05 ± 0.90	2878 ± 895
Weasel	58 ± 38	1.22 ± 0.29	71 ± 86
Coyote	724 ± 125	4.49 ± 1.23	3250 ± 1127
Badger	58 ± 38	1.22 ± 0.29	71 ± 86

Table 16. Distribution of furbearer harvest among effective trappers in Illinois, 1997-98 season. Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Total Season Catch	Percentage of Effective Trappers										
	Muskrat (392)	Mink (231)	Raccoon (554)	Opossum (368)	Red fox (96)	Gray fox (16)	Beaver (262)	Striped skunk (111)	Weasel (9)	Coyote (113)	Badger (9)
1	8.4	35.1	2.5	9.8	57.3	87.5	13.7	27.9	77.8	40.7	77.8
2	5.9	22.5	2.7	10.1	17.7	6.3	12.2	23.4	22.2	15.0	22.2
3	5.1	10.0	2.9	8.4	8.3	6.3	13.7	11.7	0.0	12.4	0.0
4	4.8	6.5	2.5	7.9	1.0	0.0	6.9	10.8	0.0	5.3	0.0
5	3.3	6.5	2.5	7.1	4.2	0.0	4.6	6.3	0.0	3.5	0.0
6	3.1	4.8	4.3	6.0	7.3	0.0	5.7	7.2	0.0	4.4	0.0
7	1.3	3.0	2.9	1.9	2.1	0.0	3.8	0.9	0.0	4.4	0.0
8	2.6	1.7	2.9	4.9	1.0	0.0	4.2	1.8	0.0	2.7	0.0
9	2.3	3.0	0.9	2.4	0.0	0.0	3.1	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
10	6.1	0.9	6.0	8.4	0.0	0.0	5.0	3.6	0.0	0.9	0.0
11	1.0	0.4	2.3	1.1	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0
12	2.8	0.9	3.4	3.8	0.0	0.0	2.3	0.9	0.0	0.9	0.0
13	2.3	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0
14	0.5	1.3	2.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.0
15	2.6	1.3	4.9	3.3	0.0	0.0	3.1	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0
16-20	9.2	0.9	8.3	8.2	1.0	0.0	4.6	2.7	0.0	0.9	0.0
20-25	4.3	0.9	7.0	2.4	0.0	0.0	5.3	0.9	0.0	0.9	0.0
>25	34.4	0.4	41.0	13.3	0.0	0.0	7.6	0.9	0.0	2.7	0.0

Table 17. Summary of muskrat trapper and harvest data by furbearer management zones in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=392).

Area	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest (%)	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
North Zone	1442 (57.4)	1.76	39.66 ± 10.27	57190 (63.7)	69.88
South Zone	1070 (42.6)	1.67	30.45 ± 7.34	32591 (36.3)	50.73
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	..	0	..
Statewide	2512 (100.0)	1.72	35.73 ± 6.70	89781	61.46

Table 18. Summary of mink trapper and harvest data by furbearer management zones in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=231).

Area	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest (%)	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
North Zone	865 (58.4)	1.06	3.71 ± 0.93	3211 (57.2)	3.92
South Zone	615 (41.6)	0.96	3.91 ± 0.79	2403 (42.8)	3.74
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	..	0	..
Statewide	1481 (100.0)	1.01	3.79 ± 0.63	5615	3.84

Table 19. Summary of raccoon trapper and harvest data by furbearer management zones in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=554).

Area	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest (%)	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
North Zone	2218 (62.5)	2.71	38.14 ± 5.53	84571 (66.2)	103.34
South Zone	1333 (37.5)	2.08	32.38 ± 5.03	43167 (33.8)	67.20
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	..	0	..
Statewide	3551 (100.0)	2.43	35.97 ± 3.95	127737	87.45

Table 20. Summary of opossum trapper and harvest data by furbearer management zones in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=368).

Area	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest (%)	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
North Zone	1487 (63.0)	1.82	12.67 ± 2.30	18837 (58.1)	23.02
South Zone	872 (37.0)	1.36	15.58 ± 4.48	13581 (41.9)	21.14
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	..	0	..
Statewide	2359 (100.0)	1.61	13.74 ± 2.21	32418	22.19

Table 21. Summary of red fox trapper and harvest data by furbearer management zones in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=96).

Area	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest (%)	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
North Zone	391 (63.5)	0.48	2.38 ± 0.63	929 (66.8)	1.14
South Zone	224 (36.5)	0.35	2.06 ± 0.59	461 (33.2)	0.72
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	..	0	..
Statewide	615 (100.0)	0.42	2.26 ± 0.46	1391	0.95

Table 22. Summary of gray fox trapper and harvest data by furbearer management zones in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=16).

Area	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest (%)	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
North Zone	26 (25.0)	0.03	1.00 ± 0.00	26 (21.1)	0.03
South Zone	77 (75.0)	0.12	1.25 ± 0.35	96 (78.9)	0.15
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	..	0	..
Statewide	103 (100.0)	0.07	1.19 ± 0.27	122	0.08

Table 23. Summary of beaver trapper and harvest data by furbearer management zones in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=262).

Area	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest (%)	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
North Zone	1019 (60.7)	1.25	9.31 ± 1.81	9486 (58.6)	11.59
South Zone	660 (39.3)	1.03	10.14 ± 2.45	6691 (41.4)	10.42
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	..	0	..
Statewide	1679 (100.0)	1.15	9.63 ± 1.46	16177	11.07

Table 24. Summary of skunk trapper and harvest data by furbearer management zones in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=111).

Area	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest (%)	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
North Zone	551 (77.5)	0.67	4.29 ± 1.11	2365 (82.2)	2.89
South Zone	160 (22.5)	0.25	3.20 ± 1.08	513 (17.8)	0.80
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	..	0	..
Statewide	711 (100.0)	0.49	4.05 ± 0.91	2878	1.97

Table 25. Summary of weasel trapper and harvest data by furbearer management zones in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=9).

Area	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest (%)	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
North Zone	26 (44.4)	0.03	1.25 ± 0.49	32 (45.5)	0.04
South Zone	32 (55.6)	0.05	1.20 ± 0.39	38 (54.5)	0.06
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	..	0	..
Statewide	58 (100.0)	0.04	1.22 ± 0.29	71	0.05

Table 26. Summary of coyote trapper and harvest data by furbearer management zones in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=113).

Area	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest (%)	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
North Zone	423 (58.4)	0.52	4.32 ± 1.78	1827 (56.2)	2.23
South Zone	301 (41.6)	0.47	4.72 ± 1.58	1423 (43.8)	2.21
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	..	0	..
Statewide	724 (100.0)	0.50	4.49 ± 1.23	3250	2.22

Table 27. Summary of badger trapper and harvest data by furbearer management zones in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=9).

Area	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest (%)	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
North Zone	51 (88.9)	0.06	1.25 ± 0.32	64 (90.9)	0.08
South Zone	6 (11.1)	0.01	1.00 ± 0.00	6 (9.1)	0.01
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	..	0	..
Statewide	58 (100.0)	0.04	1.22 ± 0.33	71	0.05

Table 28. The number of pelts sold by trappers for 11 species of furbearers in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=590).

Species	Total Number of Pelts Sold	Pelts Sold in Illinois		Pelts Sold Outside Illinois	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Muskrat	87,512	71,553	81.76	15,959	18.24
Mink	5,300	4,121	77.76	1,179	22.24
Raccoon	123,776	98,171	79.31	25,605	20.69
Opossum	24,221	20,875	86.19	3,346	13.81
Red fox	1,263	1,077	85.25	186	14.75
Gray fox	90	83	92.58	7	7.42
Beaver	14,953	10,069	67.34	4,884	32.66
Striped skunk	993	884	89.07	109	10.93
Weasel	32	26	80.12	6	19.88
Coyote	2,551	1,865	73.11	686	26.89
Badger	45	45	100.00	0	0.00
Total	260,736	208,769	80.07	51,967	19.93

Table 29. Summary of fur hunting activities by trappers[a] in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=689).

Species	Number of Trappers in Sample Hunting Species	Number of Furbearers Harvested by Hunting	Average Number Harvested by Hunting	Estimated Percent of All Trappers Effectively Hunting Species	Estimated Total Harvest by All Trappers Effectively Hunting Species
Raccoon	158	4,761	30.19	22.93	30,515
Opossum	43	271	6.30	6.24	1,737
Red fox	19	45	2.37	2.76	288
Gray fox	0	0	0.00	0.00	0
Striped skunk	5	19	3.80	0.73	122
Coyote	89	713	8.01	12.92	4,570
All species	214[b]	5,809	27.14	31.06	37,232

[a]Active and inactive trappers.

[b]Total for all species is less than the sum of the above values because many trappers hunted >1 species.

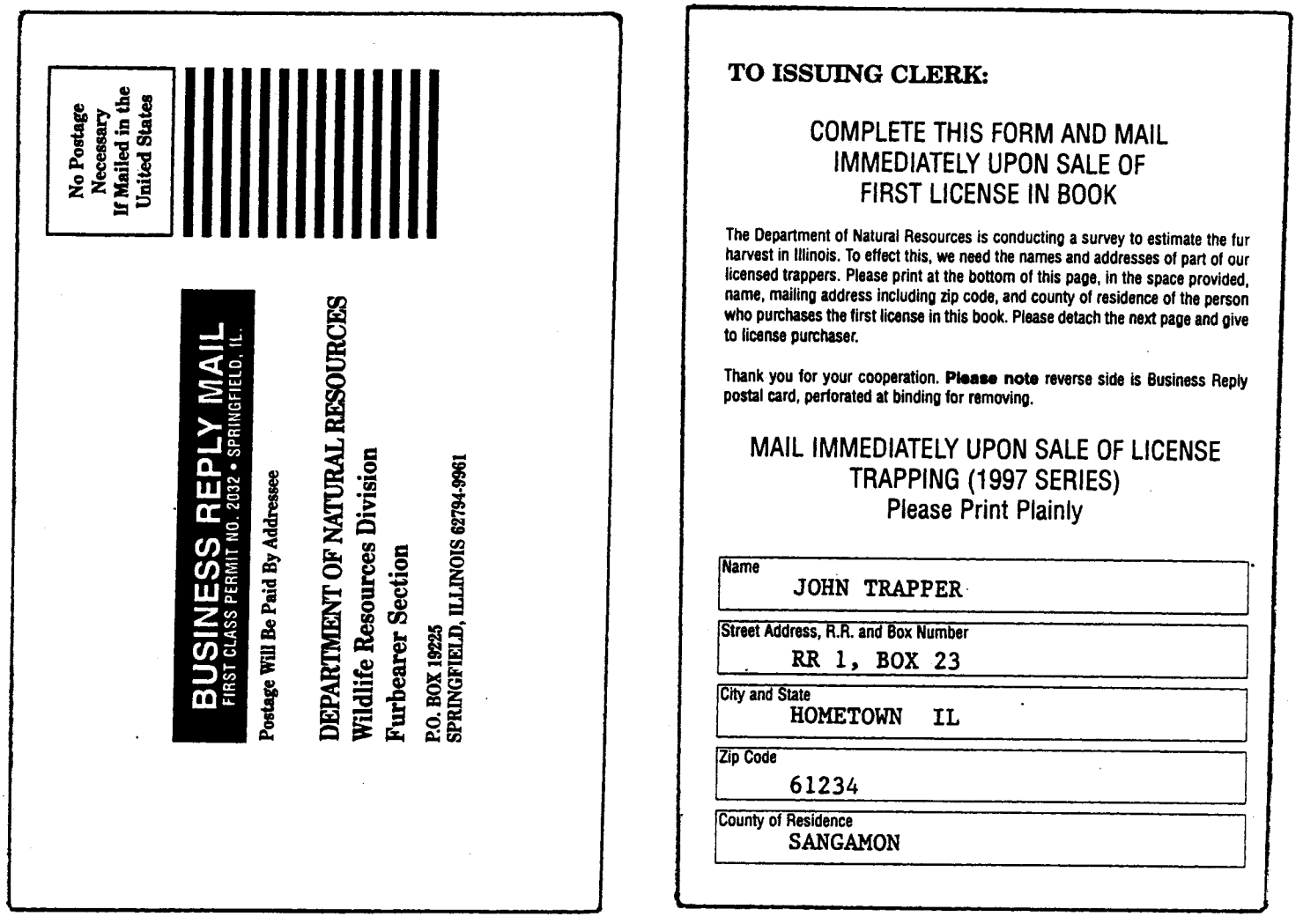
Table 30. Percentage of raccoon harvest taken with different hunting methods employed by trappers who hunted furbearers in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=156).

Hunting Method	Percentage of Raccoon Harvest
Using a predator call (electronic or mouth)	2.6
Hunting with hounds or dogs	49.8
Using a hand-held light while on foot (no dogs or predator calls)	47.6
Others	0.0

Table 31. Assessments by fur trappers[a] as to changes in furbearer populations from 1996-97 season to 1997-98 season. Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Species		Percentage of Active Trappers			
		Up	Unchanged	Down	Don't Know
Muskrat	(530)	16.8	27.0	34.0	22.2
Raccoon	(560)	34.5	45.0	10.4	10.1
Red fox	(445)	12.4	22.5	24.9	40.2
Beaver	(487)	34.1	28.1	8.8	29.0
Coyote	(460)	42.8	20.0	7.6	29.6

[a]Active trappers.



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TO ISSUING CLERK:

COMPLETE THIS FORM AND MAIL IMMEDIATELY UPON SALE OF FIRST LICENSE IN BOOK

The Department of Natural Resources is conducting a survey to estimate the fur harvest in Illinois. To effect this, we need the names and addresses of part of our licensed trappers. Please print at the bottom of this page, in the space provided, name, mailing address including zip code, and county of residence of the person who purchases the first license in this book. Please detach the next page and give to license purchaser.

Thank you for your cooperation. **Please note** reverse side is Business Reply postal card, perforated at binding for removing.

MAIL IMMEDIATELY UPON SALE OF LICENSE
TRAPPING (1997 SERIES)
Please Print Plainly

Name: JOHN TRAPPER

Street Address, R.R. and Box Number: RR 1, BOX 23

City and State: HOMETOWN IL

Zip Code: 61234

County of Residence: SANGAMON

Figure 1. The name/address card that was issued to license vendors for conducting the 1997-98 post-season Illinois Furbearer Trapping Survey.

DETACH THIS PAGE AND GIVE TO PERSON WHO PURCHASES FIRST LICENSE IN BOOK

Dear Trapper:

Please keep an accurate record of the **number of days you had traps set, the average number and kinds of traps you used during the season, the number of furbearers you caught in traps, what county you trapped in most, and the number and kinds of pelts you sold in Illinois and Out of State.**

You may be one of the selected trappers contacted at the close of the trapping season and provided a form to return to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Thanks for your cooperation.

THE BACK SIDE OF THIS CARD MAY BE USED FOR RECORD KEEPING.

Number of TRAPS I had set: _____

Number of DAYS I had traps set: _____

FURBEARERS CAUGHT IN TRAPS: _____

Species	Total Number Caught	Number Sold	
		In Illinois	Out-of-State
Muskrat			
Mink			
Raccoon			
Opossum			
Beaver			
Red Fox			
Gray Fox			
Coyote			
Striped Skunk			
Weasel			

Other Animals Caught: _____

_____

Figure 2. Information/activity record card that was issued to trappers for conducting the 1997-98 post-season Illinois Furbearer Trapping Survey.

ILLINOIS FURBEARER TRAPPING SURVEY
1997-98 SEASON

PART A - TRAPPING ACTIVITY

1. Did you SET ANY TRAPS for furbearers in Illinois during the 1997-98 season? (*Circle number for appropriate answer*)

   Yes . . . 1 No . . . 2

   If YES, continue with Question #2. If NO, go to Question #6.

2. In which COUNTY did you do MOST of your trapping? _____ County, Illinois

3. How many days (or nights) did you have traps set? _____ days (or nights)

4. Are you currently a member of a trapping club or organization like Fur-taker's, N.T.A., or the Illinois Trapper's Association?

   Yes . . . 1 No . . . 2

PART B - HARVEST (TRAPPING ONLY)

5. Fill in ALL FOUR BLANKS for each kind of furbearer you TRAPPED in Illinois during the 1997-98 season. REPORT ONLY YOUR PERSONAL CATCH. If you trapped in partnership with another person, list only <u>your half</u> of the catch.

Species	*TOTAL Number Caught in traps*	*Number SOLD IN ILLINOIS*	*Number SOLD OR SHIPPED OUT OF STATE*	*Number NOT SOLD*
Muskrat				
Mink				
Raccoon				
Opossum				
Red fox				
Gray fox				
Beaver				
Skunk				
Weasel				
Coyote				
Badger				

(Over)

Figure 3. The questionnaire used to conduct the 1997-98 post-season Illinois Furbearer Trapping Survey (continued).

PART C - FURBEARER POPULATIONS

6. Compared to 1996-97 (last season), were the populations of the following furbearers up, unchanged, or down during 1997-98 (this season)? (*Express your opinion by circling the appropriate number for each species*)

Species	Up	Unchanged	Down	Don't Know
Muskrat	1	2	3	4
Raccoon	1	2	3	4
Red fox	1	2	3	4
Beaver	1	2	3	4
Coyote	1	2	3	4

7. Have you seen a river otter or observed river otter sign in Illinois during the past three years?

Yes . . . 1 No . . . 2 If yes, list county: _____

8. Have you seen a bobcat or observed bobcat sign in Illinois during the past three years?

Yes . . . 1 No . . . 2 If yes, list county: _____

PART D - FURBEARER HUNTING

9. Did you also HUNT furbearers with a gun and/or dogs during the 1997-98 season?

Yes . . . 1 (please continue) No . . . 2 (please stop here and return the questionnaire)

If yes, please give the number of each kind taken:

_____ Raccoon _____ Red Fox _____ Skunk

_____ Opossum _____ Gray Fox _____ Coyote

10. If you hunted raccoons, please indicate the percentage of your total hunting catch taken by the following methods:

Using a predator call (electronic or mouth) ..... _____ %

Hunting with hounds or dogs ..... _____ %

Using a hand-held light while on foot (no dogs or predator calls) ..... _____ %

Other (please specify) ..... _____ %

Total ..... 100 %

THANKS FOR YOUR COOPERATION!!!
POSTAGE IS PREPAID

Figure 3. Continued - page 2.

ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

524 South Second Street, Springfield 62701-1787 Jim Edgar, Governor ● Brent Manning, Director

March 1998

Dear Illinois Trapper:

The Department of Natural Resources conducts an annual survey of trappers to collect information about harvests, trapping success, and trapping pressure. We also ask for your opinions about furbearer populations in your area.

Results of the survey allow us to estimate the number of pelts taken by trappers, value of pelts taken by trappers, and distribution of harvest pressure. Estimates of trapping success, your opinions about furbearer populations, and observations of closed-season furbearers are used with other sources of information to track changes in furbearer numbers.

You can make an important contribution to management of Illinois' fur resources by completing the enclosed questionnaire. The questionnaire is short and self-explanatory. Your participation is important because you are part of a small, random sample of people who purchased a 1997-98 trapping license. **Please reply even if you did not trap this season or were not successful.**

If you do not remember exact figures, please give your best estimate. Also, if you trapped in partnership with another person, list only your half of the catch. Drop the completed questionnaire in the mail; no postage is required.

Thank you for participating in Illinois' furbearer management program. If you have comments on topics that are not addressed by this questionnaire, please write them on a separate sheet of paper to receive proper attention.

Sincerely,

Bob Bluett

Bob Bluett
Furbearer Program Manager

Figure 4. The letter that accompanied the first mailing of the questionnaire.

[printed on recycled and recyclable paper]

ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

524 South Second Street, Springfield 62701-1787 Jim Edgar, Governor ● Brent Manning, Director

April 1998

Dear Illinois Trapper:

We recently mailed you a Trapper Harvest Survey questionnaire and requested that you fill out and return the completed form. We have not received your form at this time - perhaps because you have misplaced the questionnaire or haven't found the time to complete it and return it to us.

We are enclosing another questionnaire which we hope you will complete and return to us as soon as possible. If you have already returned the questionnaire, please destroy this one. The information supplied by you and other trappers being sampled will be of great value to the Department of Natural Resources in better directing the management of Illinois' fur resources.

Please fill out the questionnaire and return it **even if you did not trap or were not successful**. If you trapped in partnership with another person, please list only your half of the catch. No postage is required to return the completed questionnaire. Simply fill it out and drop it in the mail.

Your prompt attention will be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Bob Bluett

Bob Bluett
Furbearer Program Manager

BB:bb

Figure 5. The letter that accompanied the second mailing of the questionnaire.

[printed on recycled and recyclable paper]

ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

524 South Second Street, Springfield 62701-1787 Jim Edgar, Governor ● Brent Manning, Director

May 1998

Dear Illinois Trapper:

This is to remind you that we would still like to receive your completed questionnaire regarding your trapping activities this past season. We don't like to keep bothering you, but this is very important information which only you can supply.

Another copy of the questionnaire is enclosed. We hope that you will complete and return it as soon as possible. If you have already returned a questionnaire, simply destroy this one.

We are making a final effort to obtain your responses so that we may compile the information received from all cooperating trappers and prepare a report of our findings. Remember, your response is needed, even if you did not trap or had an unsuccessful season. Results of the survey allow us to estimate the number of pelts taken by trappers, value of pelts taken by trappers, and distribution of harvest pressure. Estimates of trapping success, your opinions about furbearer populations, and observations of closed-season furbearers are used with other sources of information to track changes in furbearer numbers.

No postage is required to return the questionnaire. Just fill it out and drop it in the mail. Please help us complete this survey by sending your responses now.

Sincerely,

Bob Bluett

Bob Bluett
Furbearer Program Manager

BB:bb

Enc.

Figure 6. The letter that accompanied the third mailing of the questionnaire.

[printed on recycled and recyclable paper]

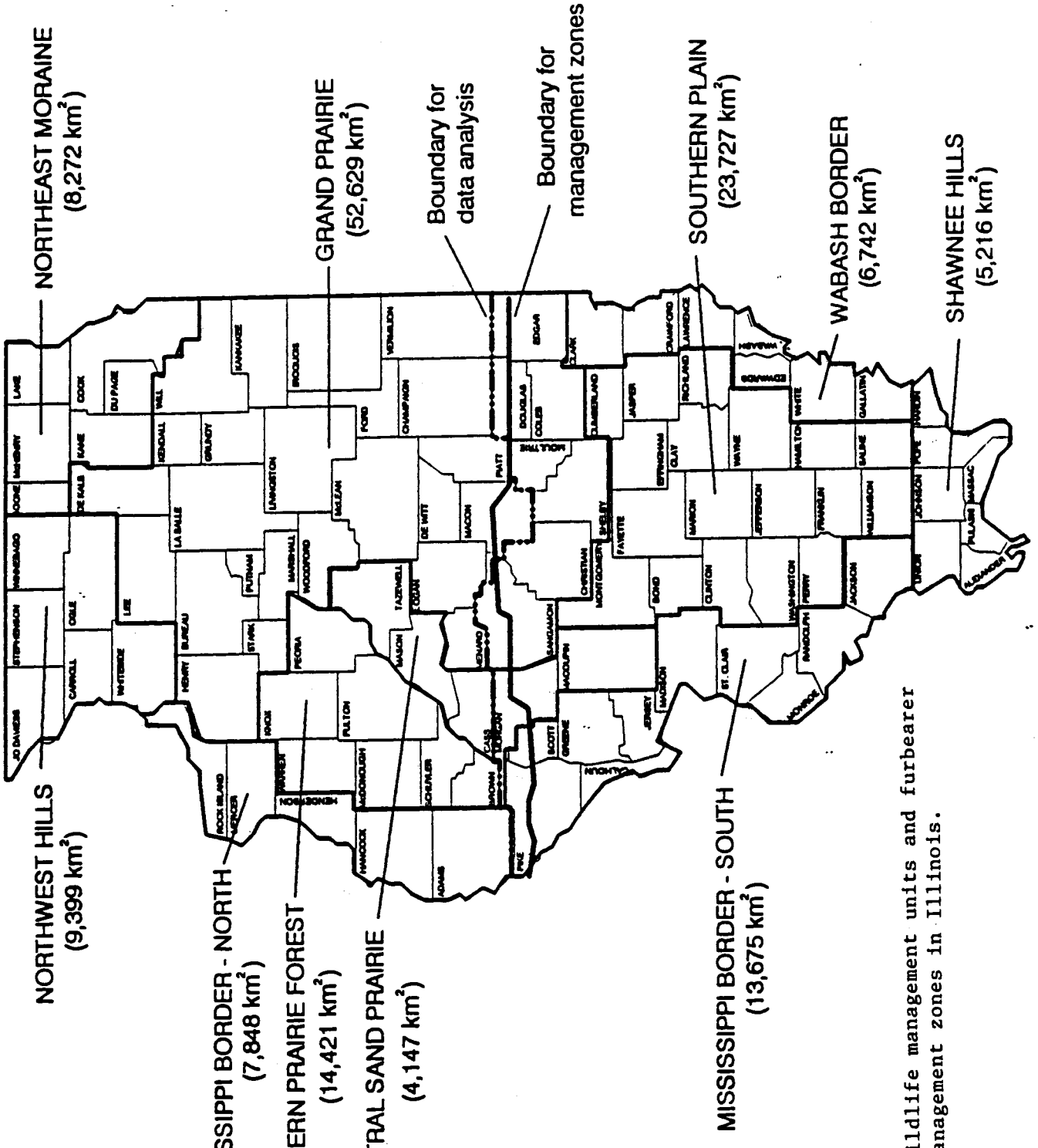

Figure 7. Wildlife management units and furbearer management zones in Illinois.

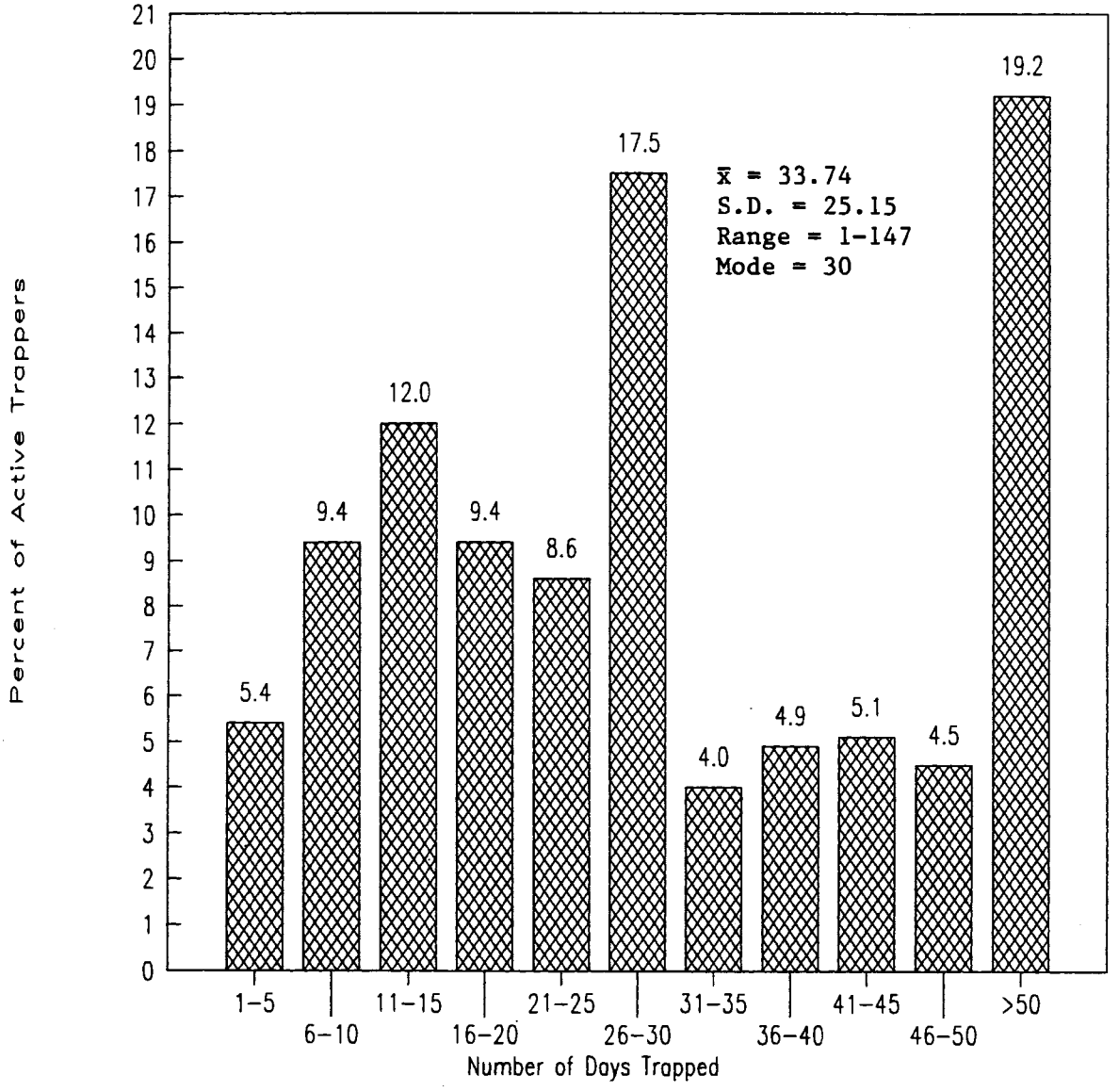

Figure 8. Distribution of days of trapping by active trappers in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=594).

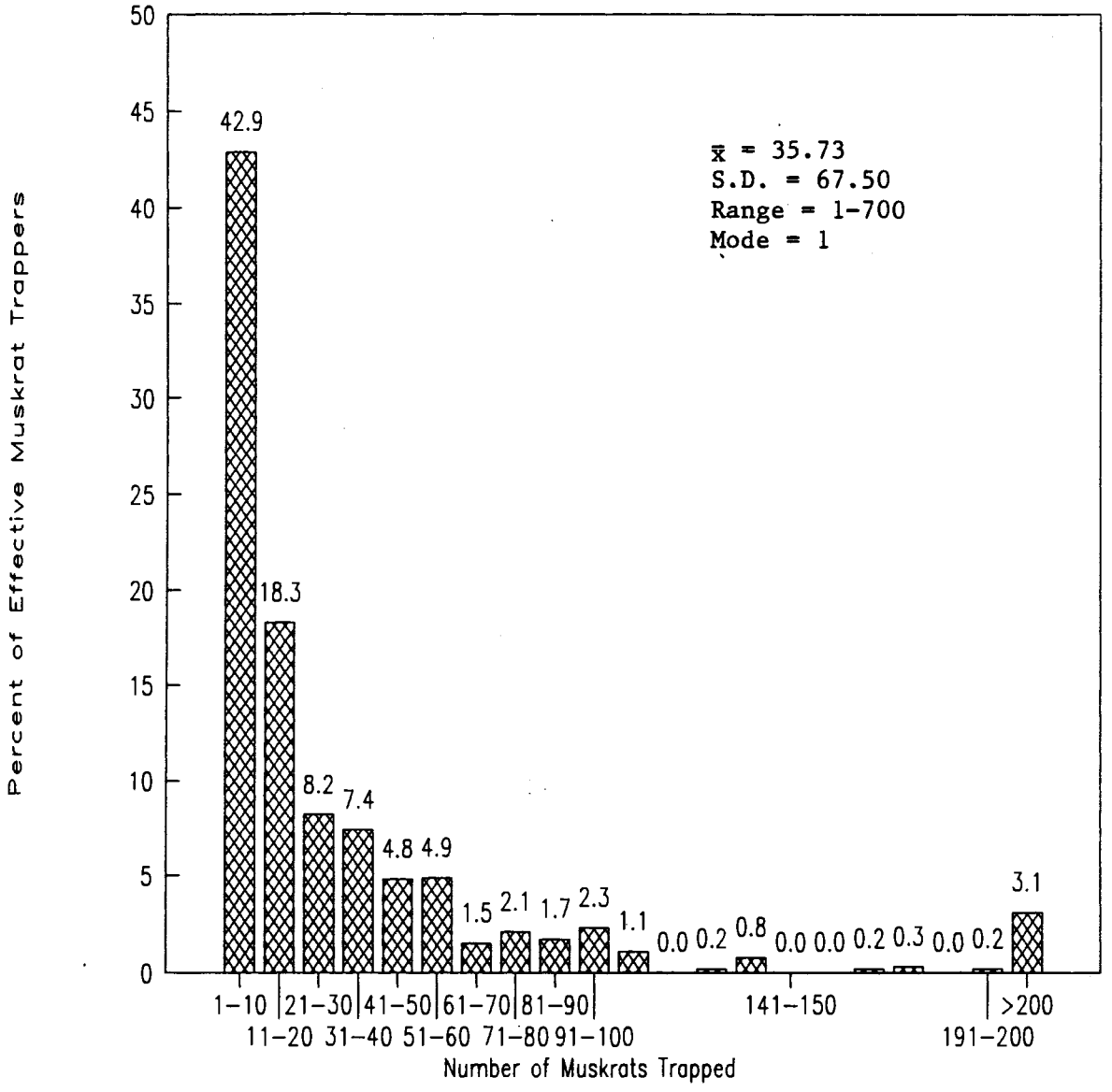

Figure 9. Distribution of the number of muskrats trapped per effective muskrat trapper in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=392).

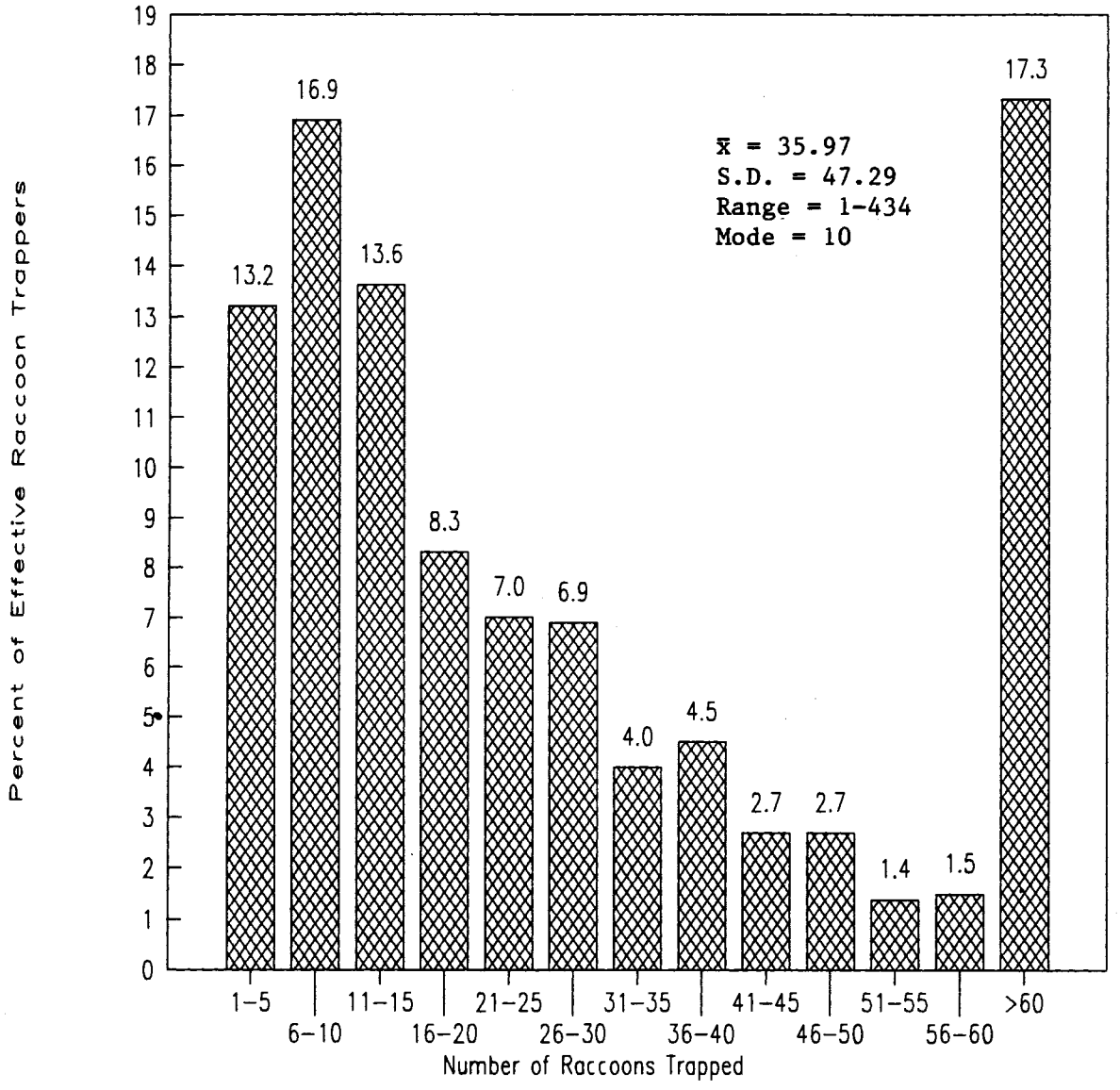

Figure 10. Distribution of the number of raccoons trapped per effective raccoon trapper in Illinois, 1997-98 season (n=554).

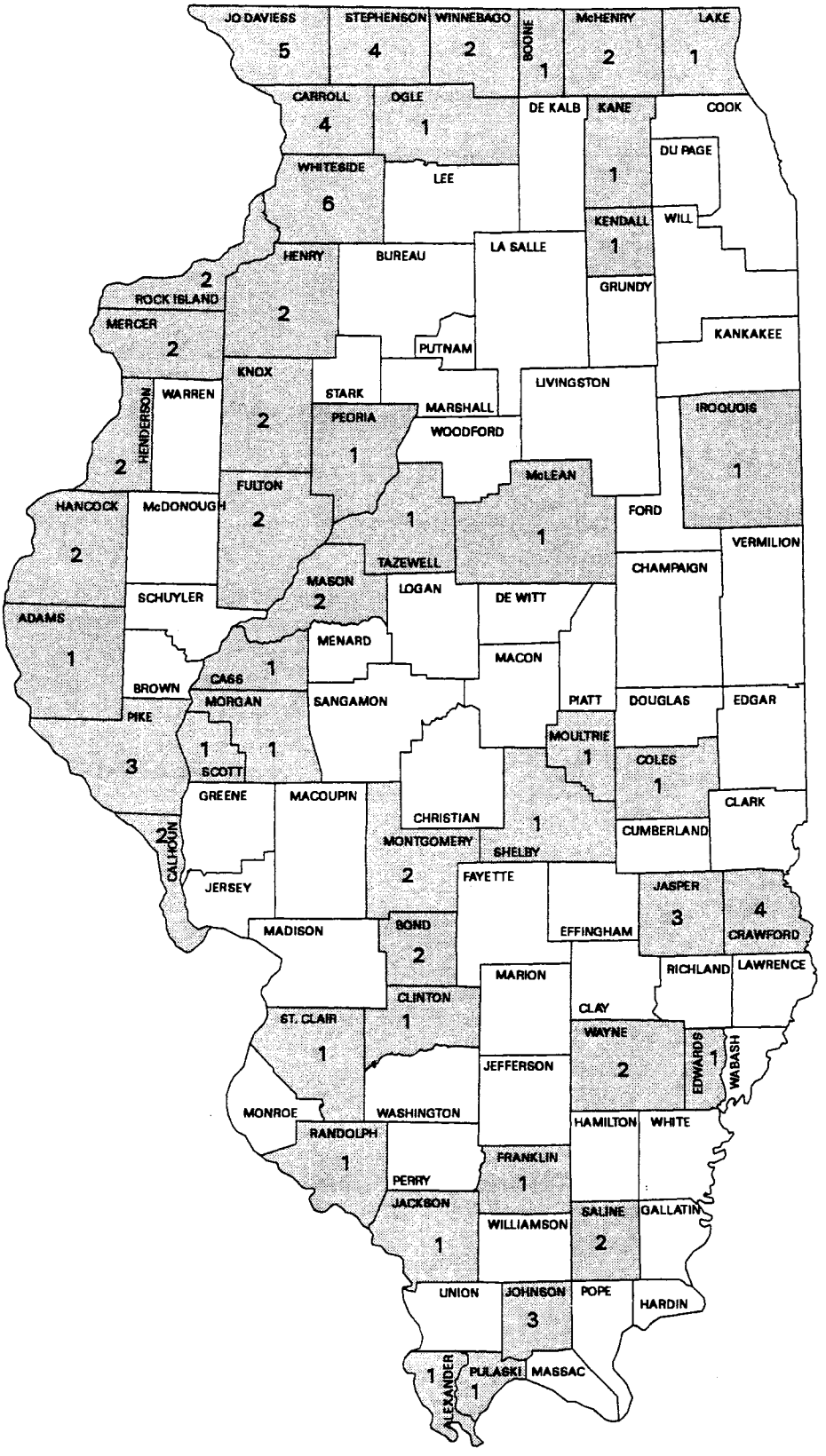

Figure 11. Illinois counties in which trappers reported observing river otters or their sign during the past three years (1995-96, 1996-97, and 1997-98 seasons). The number of reports is listed for each county.

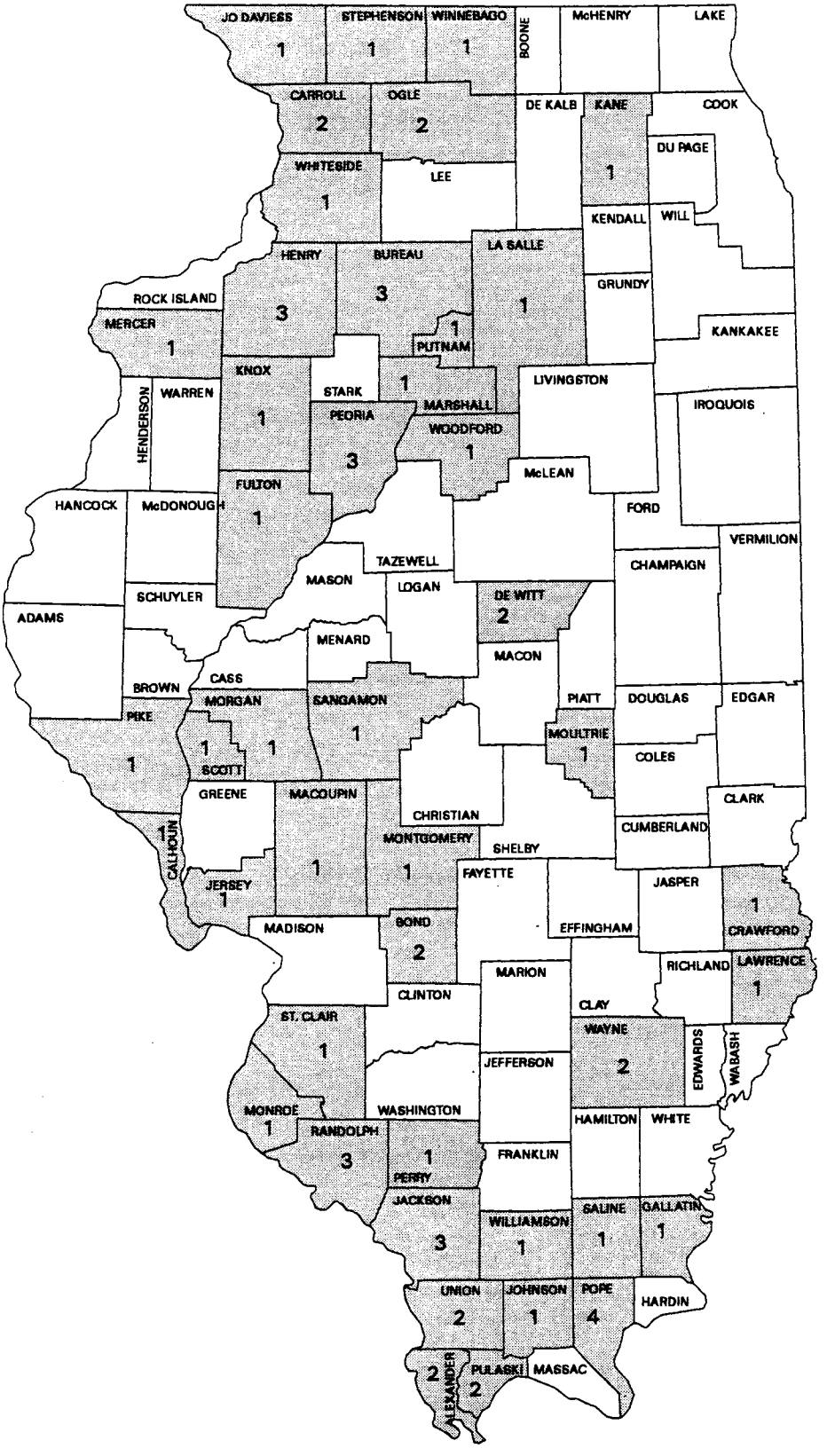

Figure 12. Illinois counties in which trappers reported observing bobcats or their sign during the past three years (1995-96, 1996-97, and 1997-98 seasons). The number of reports is listed for each county.